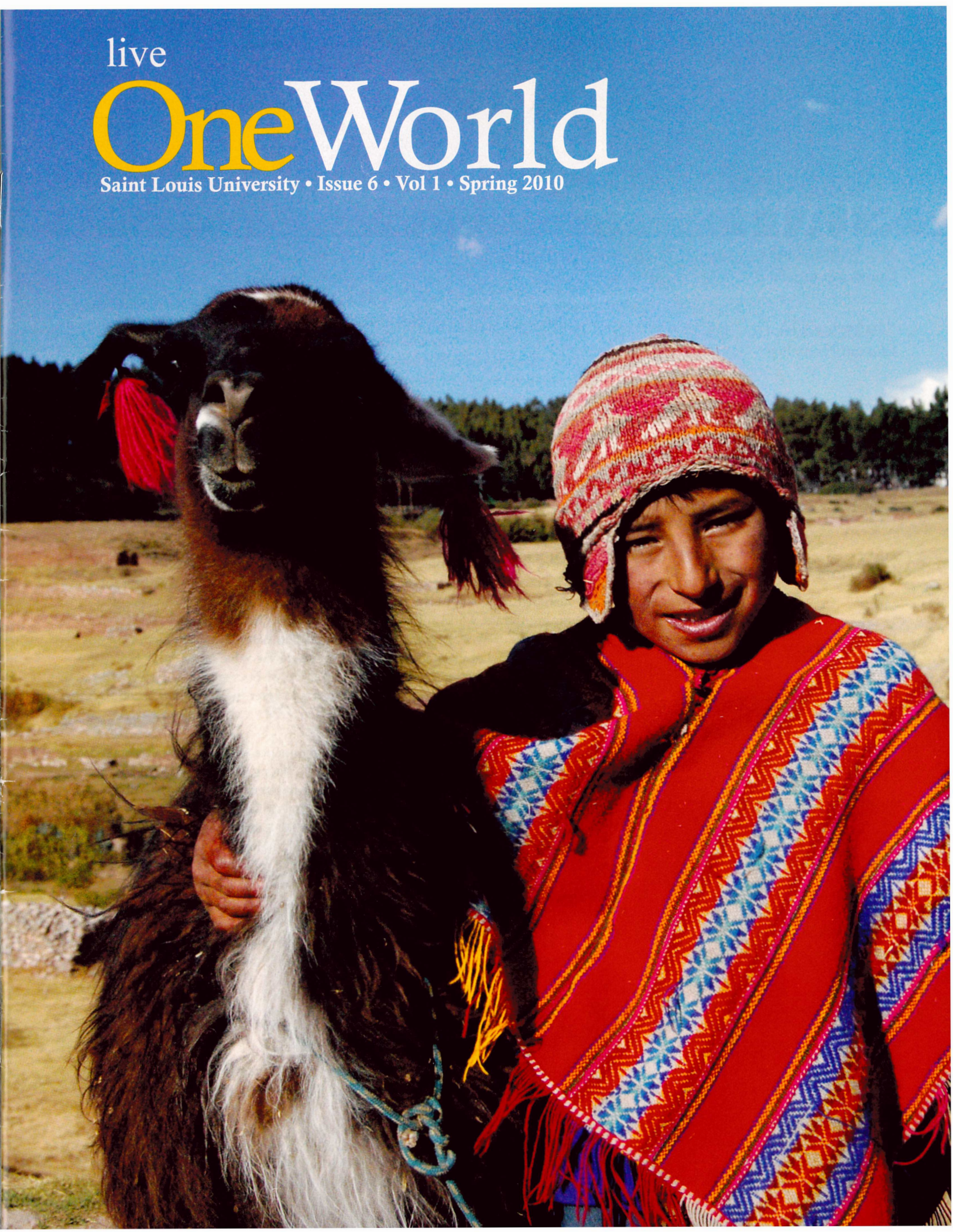

live

OneWorld

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Our Mission Statement

We are already one, but we imagine that we are not. OneWorld exists to rediscover that, while we are many in our cultures, religions, and struggles, we are one in our common humanity. We yearn to remove the barriers of ignorance and injustice, because the most basic and unchanging truth that unites us is the infinite value of the human person. OneWorld emphasizes this unity by raising awareness of social injustice, inspiring action, and transforming our hearts, minds, and society.

Dear Readers,

A professor asked his students a deceivingly simple question on the first day of class: "Why did you go to college?" It is surprising to realize that this question does not have a simple answer. Why do we pursue and value knowledge? Whatever our answer, we remain in the academic world because to have knowledge is to have power. As we learn more about the events and troubles of the world around us, we are compelled to action. The opportunity to attend college and surround ourselves with mentors and peers who are committed to serving and advocating for the marginalized is a powerful tool and we can use it to serve those who are suffering around the world and in our own backyards. Live OneWorld exists to offer our community a venue to share knowledge and experiences and to grow in our common goal of social justice. In a world where the value of the human person is often ignored, we must ask ourselves, "Why do we pursue knowledge?" We do so in hopes that we prepare our minds and hearts to enter the world and become agents of change.

Live OneWorld deeply values the care and guidance we receive from our mentors, advisors, and supporters. We extend Jason L. Young, OneWorld's staff advisor, our deep and genuine gratitude. Jason's commitment and guidance challenge OneWorld to constantly improve. We would also like to thank Tim Keane of the Emerson Ethics Center for the innovation, talent, and support of our shared mission. We thank Kent Porterfield and Student Development for their invaluable mentoring and support. Michelle Lorenzini continues to be a source of guidance. We would also like to thank Campus Progress and our CP advisor David Spett, to whom OneWorld owes much of the improvements it has made in the past year and a half. OneWorld is able to touch our community because of the network of support we receive from our network of mentors, supporters, and the Saint Louis University community, who are fully committed to pursuing lives of service for others.

Live OneWorld,
Lauren and Johanna

Published with support from Campus Progress /Center for American Progress (online at CampusProgress.org).

Above: Spices in a Nepali market. Photo by Jessica Nakajima.
Front cover: A boy from the mountainous area around the Incan ruins of Sacsayhuamán outside of Cuzco, Perú, walks the fields with his alpaca. Photo by Tyler Porth.
Back cover: Josephine, an orphan in Haut-Limbe, Haiti pauses during a game of catch. Photo by Lauren Hashiguchi.

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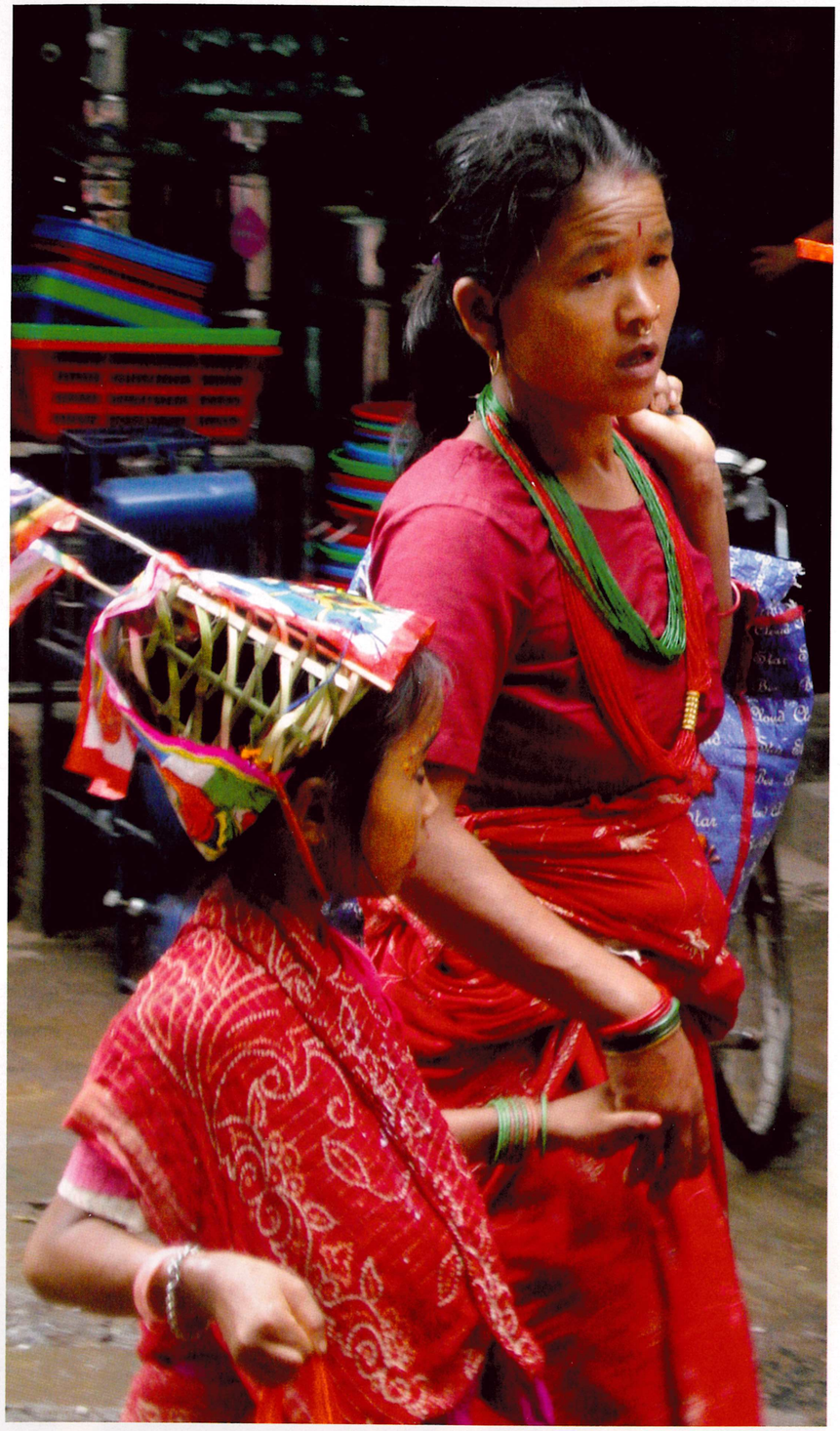
Doors in Nepal. Photos by Jessica Nakajima

Nepal is a small country of 30 million people, locked between two emerging superpowers, India and China. In recent years, Nepal has undergone a political revolution, moving from a Hindu kingdom to a secular democracy. Nepal is poised for change in the new decade, as it confronts continued political instability.



Right: A Nepali woman walks with a young boy as they participate in the parade of the Gai Jatra. Photo by Jessica Nakajima.

A GLIMPSE INTO NEPALI CULTURE

HOLY COWS!

BY JESSICA NAKAJIMA

There are over 10,000 cows in Kathmandu Durbar Square. However, these cows walk upright! How can this be? The majority of these "cows" are actually humans in highly stylized costumes. Wearing masks and large horns, the people of the city are celebrating Gai Jatra, the festival of the cows. According to tradition, any family who has lost a relative during the past year must take part in a procession through the streets of Kathmandu that is lead by a cow. In place of the large beast, a young boy dressed as a cow is considered a fair substitute! The cow, revered as a holy animal by Hindus, will help the deceased relative journey to heaven. According to my host mother, Gai Jatra originated historically when a queen fell into a deep depression following the death of her son. To try to end her misery King Pratap Malla ordered everyone who had lost a relative to come to the square, with their sons dressed as cows. Upon seeing how many citizens had suffered similar losses and the sight of so many "cows," the queen laughed. Years later, the festival is still far from a solemn funeral march. Orange, not black, is the holy color for the festival. The boys struggle to hold large sacks, bulging with sweets and coins, given to them by adults all around the square. They stop every few minutes, tilting their heads back to receive mouthfuls of steaming, fragrant milk tea. In a strange way, it resembles Halloween, with its remembrance of the deceased, its elaborate costumes, and the accompanying inundation of free sweets. Gai Jatra celebrates death with a spirit that is completely in touch with the Nepali sensibility and a culture of joy. There is laughter, games, and endless vendors with their wares displayed on blue tarps. Even in the midst of remembering the losses of the past year, the Nepali revelers shine with hope for a better future.

CLOSING *the gap*

by Allison Reilly

Casa de Salud, a recently opened health clinic near SLU's campus, provides affordable, quality care for the under-served to close the health gap between the rich and poor.

After closing this past May, La Clinica is reopening as its reincarnation, Casa de Salud. Translating loosely as "house of health" in Spanish, Casa de Salud is a non-profit health care clinic for the uninsured and the under-insured.

In January Casa de Salud opened their doors to the community for the first time. Saint Louis University excitedly welcomes Casa into the community. Upon learning of its predecessor's closing last year, students helped La Clinica close debt free with an a capella fundraiser. Additionally , the university provided a facility to house the clinic near the Medical Campus.

La Clinica served over 11,000 people each year; many of La Clinica's patient contacts are returning to Casa de Salud, so this number is expected to stay the same. The clinic will offer services from pre-natal care to dental care at a cost that is affordable for those struggling to make ends meet.

Though some of La Clinica's volunteers are carrying over as well, more are still needed. "There are always things to do," reports Katie Semkiu, the student volunteer coordinator. Volunteer work includes filing, paperwork, organizing events, and working directly with the patients. The clinic prefers volunteers who speak Spanish language, as it allows them to provide focused care to many in the Hispanic community.

"It's a chance to make an impact you can see," said Semkiu. "Casa has the possibility to make a significant difference in the community. The programs they are doing are unique to the needs of the city."

Interested in volunteering at Casa de Salud? Contact Katie Semkiu at ksemkiu@slu.edu for more information and visit http://casa-desaludstl.bbnow.org.

Student files paperwork as the clinic prepare to open its doors. Photo by Sarah Henn.

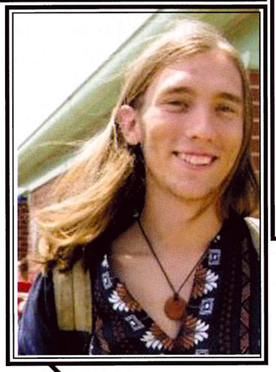
SLU grads in service

by Allison Reilly

John Nolan: Catholic Worker and Food Not Bombs Project

"Living in an intentional community is radically different than conventional life," says John Nolan, a Spring 2008 graduate. "I find a lot of value in living a lifestyle of mutual aid." Nolan lives in the Kabat House, a Catholic Worker community in St. Louis dedicated to connecting immigrants with the services and resources they need. The community practices hospitality, community and nonviolent resistance. The Catholic Workers pool all funds earned from their outside jobs to fund the community and its outreach projects.

One of Nolan's projects with Kabat House's is Food Not Bombs, where food is prepared and served to people in various public places. They feed all who come to them.



James Lochhead: Social Justice to the CORE

"The talk of experiences made it easier to go through the hard days," says James Lochhead, a Spring 2009 graduate who spent a semester of his junior year in El Salvador. Now Lochhead is the mastermind behind SLUCORE, a new service program on Saint Louis University's campus focused on providing reliable volunteers at service sites.

SLUCORE is based on three principles: accountability, community, and transformation. There are currently three volunteer sights and students are required a one-year commitment to the program. Once a week, volunteers reflect on their service work in groups.

"Don't feel like you have to be something in order to do something. All the people we admire struggle with the same thing and they just went ahead and did it."

Kathryn Jonas: The Professional Activist

"Whatever work you can do can be a part of social justice," says Kathryn Jonas, a Fall 2008 graduate from SLU. Jonas recently moved to New York, but since graduation she has worked with both Missourians for Alternatives of the Death Penalty (MADP) and Amnesty International, focusing on abolishing the death penalty. With MADP, Jonas is an office manager, doing work that ranges from outreach work, to paperwork, or to training volunteers. With Amnesty International, Jonas is Missouri's death penalty action coordinator. She has been involved with social justice since her freshman year in high school, inspired by a great geography teacher.

"I see so much activism as student activism, but there are ways to remain involved after college. There are all sorts of community and local groups."

Shelter from the Storm

by Cristine Ongson

What had started as strong rainfall on the night of September 25, 2009 soon morphed into a greater force of nature. Typhoon Ondoy (or "Ketsana," as it is known internationally) made landfall, leaving the Pacific island country devastated and revealing the government's unpreparedness. Within 24 hours, Ondoy had deposited 17.9 inches of rain—the most rainfall recorded in a single day in 42 years, according to the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical Astronomical Services Administration—incurring $100 million worth in damages and 360 people dead. Ondoy did not stop there. Soon after, the tropical storm crossed over to neighboring countries Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand, where it left similar trails of destruction.

On the afternoon of September 26, a state of calamity was declared in the metro Manila area, as well as in 27 other affected provinces. Metro Manila itself is reported to have been nearly 80% under water. The severe flooding and resulting landslides created internal havoc, interrupting power and communications lines and trapping people within homes and along expressways (as reported by Filipino news network ABS-CBN). Rescue teams, such as the Philippine Coast Guard and the Philippine Red Cross, faced obstacles in maneuvering through clogged roads while waist-deep in floodwater. Images show relief goods being dropped to stranded civilians on rooftops. To date, 337,216 people have been affected by the storm, and nearly 60,000 civilians have been evacuated to 118 centers.
This is a time in the lives of us Filipinos where nothing is our everything. Where home does not exist, food becomes a luxury, and disease is lurking in every corner," senior Cristine Ongson, a Filipino foreign exchange student at SLU. "[It's] a situation that we thought was too devastating, too impossible, but yet has happened. Despite this tragedy, there are those who have stepped above and beyond of their capability to reach out and give their all. It is about giving what we have, giving what we should have, and giving what we all have to those who need it the most."

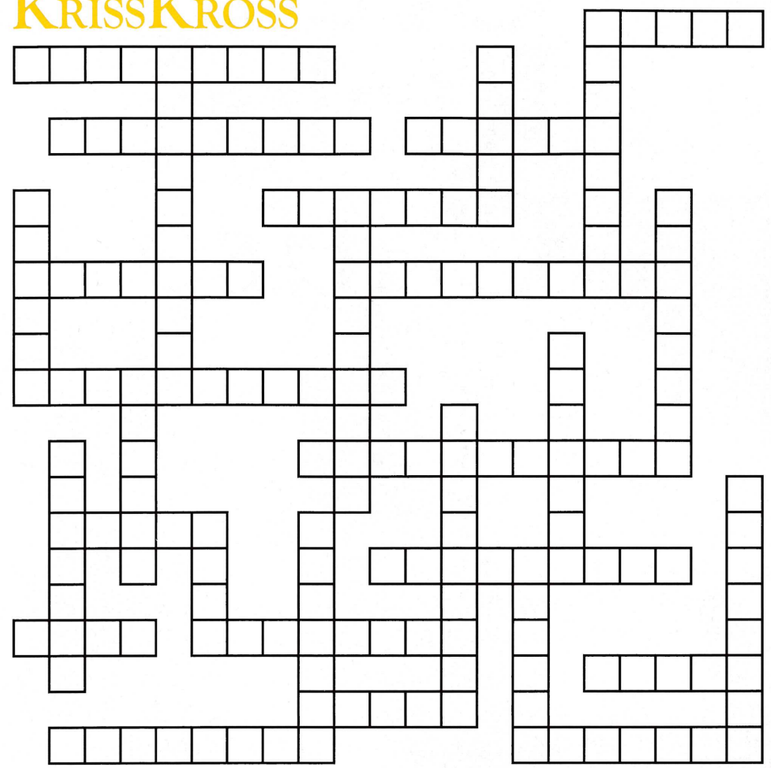
A family maneuvers a canoe through the flooded streets. Photo by Chris Quintana, part of the image collection of the International Rice Research Institute (www.irri.org)

On behalf of Ondoy victims, the Filipino Student Association at SLU will be accepting monetary and relief goods donations. For more information, please contact Operation Ondoy coordinators at fsa@slu.edu.

KrissKross

Word list

Amnesty
Assembly
Asylum
Children
Creed
Dignity
Economic
Equal
Expression
Food
Freedom
Global
Happiness
Health
Human rights
Immigrants
Integrity
Justice
Liberty
Life
Nationality
Peace
Political
Property
Security
Shelter
Spiritual
Travel
Trial
Universal
Water



CryptoQuip

The CryptoQuip below is a quote in substitution code, where A could equal R, H could equal P, etc. One way to break the code is to look for repeated letters. E, T, A, O, N and I are the most often used letters. A single letter is usually A or I; OF, IS and IT are common 2-letter words; and THE and AND are common 3-letter words. Good luck!

Henna painted hands in Nepal. Photo by Jessica Nakajima.

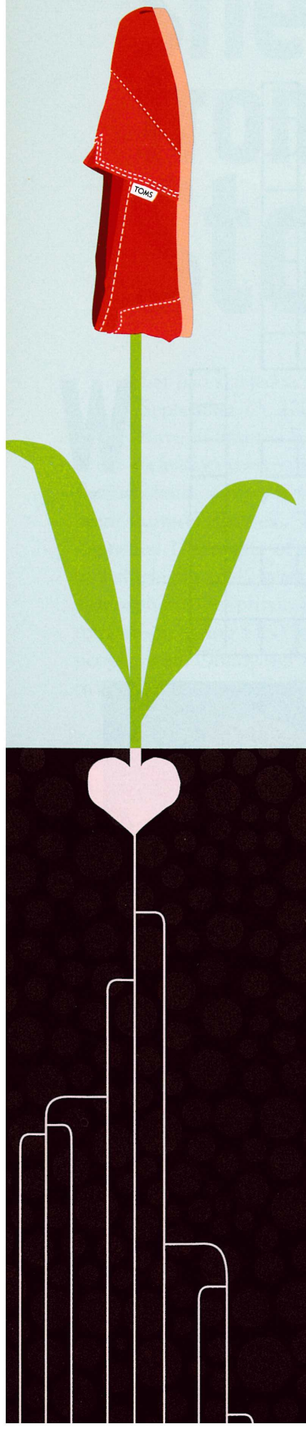
PYDNMHVABICACOUDHMGIWVCKD,OMPSDKCGID
MEPYDWDMWVDNYMCHDDTBV,SGPSDKCGIDME
PYDWDMWVDNYMAMO'PAMCOJPYBOUCSMGPBP.

- Albert Einstein

Puzzle Solutions on page 17

Creative Kicks for a Cause

by Kelcey Towell



While in Argentina, American traveler Blake Mycoskie realized that children there had cuts and infections on their feet. Astounded by this, Blake decided to take action. After returning to America, he then founded TOMS shoes with the simple idea that for every pair bought, the TOMS crew would deliver a pair to a child in need. As of April 1, 2009, TOMS has given over 140,000 pairs of shoes to children in South Africa, and the Americas.

That is precisely what attracted employees at the Missouri Botanical Garden Gate Shop. There, TOMS affiliates teamed up with the Garden staff to organize the first public TOMS event in the city of Saint Louis entitled "Style Your Soul". Having never owned a pair of TOMS shoes until only weeks before the event, I was intrigued. I had seen students around SLU wearing them, but I was still unaware of what was really behind the TOMS logo. Dubbed "eco-stylish" by the Los Angeles Times, I knew they were somewhat trendy among college students. Then, a week after the SLU-hosted Hanson Barefoot Mile walk, I was contacted by the Botanical Gardens. Along with other students from Webster, UMSL, and Washington University and local professionals, I had been chosen to be one of 14 artists to be featured in the upcoming Style Your Soul event.

"It was then that I realized I was doing more than jus painting forty-eight dollar shoes for the privileged. I was taking part in a city-wide event, to raise awareness about the underprivileged."

As soon as I arrived in the Garden's Monsanto Hall, I knew it would be a special event. Much to my excitement, each artist had their own, labeled booth complete with all kinds of supplies in order to jazz up any pair of TOMS. I sat down and almost immediately I had my first clients. Then, from one to five, straight, I barreled out 9 pairs of custom-painted shoes. While we were there, we heard from TOMS Senior Account Executive Brad Otts about their One for One mission. It was then that I realized I was doing more than just painting forty-eight dollar shoes for the privileged. I was taking part in a city-wide event, to raise awareness about the underprivileged. With each pair I completed, I saw the astonished and satisfied look of each recipient and imagined what it might be like to present a child with their first pair of shoes, possibly bearing the same reaction.

Towell paints a pair of TOMS shoes at "Style Your Soul." Photo by Kelcey Towell

Beyond the Mountains

An Interview with Tracy Kidder

Interview conducted by Lauren Hashiguchi

This fall Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, Tracy Kidder, addressed the Saint Louis University community at a Great Issues Committee Event. *Mountains Beyond Mountains* is an account of the work of Paul Farmer, a global leader in public health and CEO of Partners in Health (PIH), known in Haiti as Zanmi Lasante. Farmer's mission is based in Haiti, where it serves over half a million living in the Central Plateau. Following its success, PIH has since expanded its work to Peru, Russia, Rwanda, Lesotho, and Malawi.

Kidder speaks at a Great Issues Committee event at Saint Louis University in Fall of 2009. Photo by Neelaysh Vukkadala.

OneWorld: What was your motivation behind writing this book?

Tracy Kidder: My sole motivation at the beginning was to tell an interesting story. That's the truth. I happened on an interesting story and I wanted to tell it as well as I could; that's what I do. But of course, I got interested. If you are a storyteller you are interested in individual human beings; that's the engine of stories. And of course, if you become interested in the story of an individual human being, you are, almost by definition, interested in the worlds that those people occupy. Particularly, a story is concerned with the ideas and subjects that preoccupy them. In the case of Paul Farmer, those [subjects] are public health, medicine, poverty, and all of the ancillary subjects, as well as the distribution of those things. When you see something like Haiti, you needn't go to places like Africa to know that [its condition] is bad. I think a lot of people would feel this way, that if you see unnecessary human suffering and what looks to you like rank injustice, by witnessing this you have incurred some sort of responsibility for at least trying to do something about it. But I did not set out to do a good deed; I set out to write a good book. (Laughs)

I do think that if what you are really at is good story telling, you have to be oblivious both to the idea of making money and the idea of didacticism. There is a certain kind of writing that is didactic, and it can be very powerful, but that is not typically what I do and it certainly wasn't what I tried to do when writing *Mountains Beyond Mountains*. But afterward, I see no inherent conflict in saying to myself, "PIH is a terrific organization and they are taking on some of the most important problems in the world. For my money, they are a model of how international aid can be administered effectively, because there is plenty of international aid floating around out there that is not effective. There is a lot of money that is going into Haiti every year, much of it not helping the people it is supposed to help. You can say that about the aid from the United States; it never reaches the people it is supposed to reach and sometimes it has disastrous unintended consequences. The good intentions are clearly just not enough. I think PIH is an exemplary organization and one that other people can learn from. Part of what is exemplary about them is that they are always willing to learn from other people themselves. It is not a foundation that is set up to exist for perpetuity, one suspects sometimes mainly for the benefit of those running the organization. That's not the idea at all. Obviously [PIH] makes mistakes and there is no such thing I think as complete purity of motives, but they are pretty good.

"The good intentions are clearly just not enough."

OW: What has come from publishing *Mountains Beyond Mountains* that you are particularly proud about?

TK: Somehow when I finished this book I felt like my obligations were mainly owed to my potential readers, but little by little I became more interested in trying to help PIH. I don't have any particular skills. I can't go and doctor people. I'm not epidemiologist. But I can help raise money, and I like doing that. Basically I just do whatever Ophelia Dahl asks me to do! I guess it has been helpful. I don't think that most of what I have done overtly has been helpful, but one of the major donors to PIH told me that he did a sort of canvas of the big private donors, and I think a majority of them had come to the organization through my book. (To his wife) Bill Clinton says that, apparently. He said that the other night didn't he?

OW: Well that has got to feel good!

TK: (Laughs) Yeah I know! It seems to me that he knew Paul Farmer before my book, but never mind that!

A woman walks past an unfinished building in Port-au-Prince Haiti in June 2009. Photo by Amanda Burdick of Randolph World Ministries.

OW: You have spent considerable time in Haiti; what are your impressions of the land?

TK: I have never been anywhere but Port-au-Prince and the Central Plateau because what I did was never tourism. Wherever you are with Paul Farmer, you go to hospitals and prisons. Basically those are the sites you visit. In Peru there was never any chance of going to Machu Picchu or the Bolshoi Ballet of Moscow. But I did see a lot of the Central Plateau. It is natively beautiful, but it is tragic looking in that part of the country because there is desertification in what should be a tropical paradise. If you look at Zanmi Lasante, you see what Haiti should look like, but that is because Paul planted trees, gosh, 25 years ago! I don't think he's let them chop down one tree.

OW: Now for the tough questions: if you had the opportunity to change any one thing about Haiti, what would it be?

TK: That is a really interesting question. The one thing I would change... I'm just trying to think of what the most powerful thing to change would be. If I could change it starting way back, I would change American policy towards Haiti. The policies are revolting.

OW: There is the saying, "Give a man to fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime." Do you think the country of Haiti can learn to fish?

TC: Haiti doesn't have what it needs to reconstruct itself. The damage of deforestation will be hard enough to address. I don't think they have the resources to do this on their own. They get a lot of aid, but it is not going where it needs to go. We [the international community] need concerted action without ideology. We need to pool resources and address the heart of the problems. PIH has tried to do this, but many other organizations are self-serving and are not willing to do this. It leaves me wondering "Why? Why is this?"

OW: Well it looks like that is all the time we have. Thank you so much!

TK: Thank you.

Witness in Kenya

Text and Photos by Katie Langley

While sitting in a van on the way from the Nairobi Airport to the small convent I would be sleeping in for the next three days, I was in awe of everything around me. I saw taxi vans packed with a dozen people speeding down the road blaring rap, barbed wire on the side of the highway so the animals like giraffes and zebra could not cross in, and huge billboards advertised American products in the Swahili language. These images that met my eyes during the first moments of my immersion trip to Kenya, Africa. I share several experiences in hopes to write a mosaic of the trip that opened my eyes, heart, and mind to the realities and difficulties of social justice in many areas of the world.

The first few days we stayed in Nairobi, touring around the city, eating authentic Kenyan foods and learning as much as we could about this extremely foreign place. We visited a school almost everyday. Every time we went into a classroom, the teachers and students were so ecstatic to have visitors that they would prepare for us a performance of some sort, a song or a dance or a short poem in theatrical form. We were fed huge meals of goat, rice, vegetables, and a Kenyan specialty called *ugali*. It was like we were being honored as guests, when in my mind it was the other way.

Over the course of my time there, we saw beautiful things. The Kenyan countryside is even more breath-taking than the lush hills in Italy, covered in green farms and streams and cliffs and colorful houses. It was nothing like the stereotypical "bush" I always thought of when someone said "Africa." We went on a safari and sat fifteen feet from a male lion and his mate, from a rhino just strolling down the beach, saw hippos bathing in a river, and watched a heard of giraffe graze in the trees. We saw many smiling faces, children so excited to see us and families so proud to share with us their food and stories. So much resilience, so much inspiration, yet so much heartache.

One night we slept in an orphanage for disabled children in southwest Kenya that was owned by an order of nuns. Some of us had mattresses on the floor, some of us on wire beds. Our mosquito nets were covered in dirt. The room the little boys slept in had just beds, not enough blankets or nets to go around. They slept in the clothes they wore that day. The room stank of urine. There was no electricity or running water, the toilets were cement blocks with holes that to flush down you had to go outside and get a bucket of water and pour it into the cement block. They showered out of rubber bags with bugs everywhere.

In another village in southwest Kenya, we went to a school in the hills for kids with cerebral palsy, burns, and cleft lips. There was a hospital there, but even the sterilization equipment was non-functioning.

We visited a slum called Dandora. We entered an orphanage, where each bed held three children. There were not enough mosquito nets to protect each bed, and trash covered the street outside. There was a gigantic trash dump that continued for miles and extended a few stories high. People live here. Babies are born here. Children grow up here. Our group leader, Joe, told us that we would see birds and pigs fighting the little kids for their food. I didn't expect to actually witness this, but to my disappointment, I did. Kids playing in the trash would roll down the piles while huge, angry, dirty pigs (larger than some of the children) waiting at the bottom to chase them away.

We also went to the largest slum on the continent of Africa, Kibara. Standing up on a hill overlooking the slum, it looked like a gigantic solar panel because of the sea of shacks with flimsy roofs of metal and tin. Here we visited a school, where the kids all gathered in one

A women from the mountains outside of Nairobi stands outside of the school her children attend, which she walks for miles to reach.

Left: A school for children ages 3-12 sits outside of Nairobi. It is run by the woman who created the Bride Rescue School.

A group of women who live in the Kenyan mountains weave baskets, their only source of income.

room to look at us, "the visitors." Six children performed a poem for us about the progress of the womens' rights movement in Kenya. During the presentation, the little boys ordered the little girls to make them food, prepare their bed for them, wash their clothes. The little girls responded, telling the little boys "No, we are human too, we will not lay down on the ground for you, we will not be treated as slaves." At the end of the performance, the boys and girls grabbed onto the same stick to represent equality, and walked off to prepare the food together. Before leaving for my trip, I had anticipated seeing hunger, slums, children without shoes. I had not anticipated to be so touched by the stuggles of women.

One group of girls at an agricultural farm we visited presented a poem for us called, "Educate the Woman, Educate the Whole Family." These girls were twelve years old, and said things like "I am not to be traded for a pig, I am not to be traded for a cow, I am not to be traded for a fruit tree. I am a woman, I am strong, I am a human being. Educate the woman, educate the whole family." The worries I dealt with as a twelve-year-old suddenly seemed small compared to these girls, who worried about female genital mutilation (FGM) or the prospect of being sold by their family into marriages with much older than them. How was this the same world? How was this happening just on the other side of the earth?

One of the most powerful experiences for me was when we went to a Bride Rescue School on one of our last days in the Kenya. This is a school for girls who have been genitally mutilated or forced into marriage by their families. The girls fled their homes and are now housed at the school for protection. There are about 600 girls at this school, the youngest is 9 years old. We visited the classrooms and sat with the girls during class. We also drove a couple miles to speak with the woman who created the program a few years ago. She told us about how the program's history and how it operated. There are women who either went to the school themselves or support the school and will discreetly enter the villages of Kenya to locate and contact girls who are soon to undergo FGM or early marriage. In secret, they offer girls an opportunity to rendezvous in a location and leave for the rescue school. The fact that a system like this exists is incredibly controversial, much less even the idea that women are living, thinking, human beings who deserves rights, equality, and freedom. In some tribes, "rape" isn't even a concept that exists, because even if a woman is raped it is seen as the woman's fault for being promiscuous by choice. Yet, as we were told and witnessed first hand from the poems recited to us by the little kids in Kibara and on the farm, younger generations are beginning to consider womens' equality in society.

My time in Kenya was indescribable. Every day I learned something unexpected. Though I witnessed social injustice, oppression, marginalization, and abject poverty, I also saw the most genuine, beautiful smiles I have ever seen. I heard the most incredible, insatiable voices telling eye-opening stories. I held the hands of hopeful children and danced with resilient women to the consuming beat of African drums. I used to share a commonly held, imperialistic view of "I want to go over there and help all those people that don't live how I live," but instead my mind was opened, my heart was filled, and my perspective was changed. Global solidarity isn't about just "helping" those we see as impoverished and unfortunate; it is standing in solidarity together, to help each other and to learn from each other. These injustices we learn about, whether it be HIV/AIDS, hunger, poor education systems, a lack of women's rights, etc., are all too solid of a presence in most of the world. It is our responsibility to return from our experiences abroad and begin working for change.

SLU Task Force for Haiti

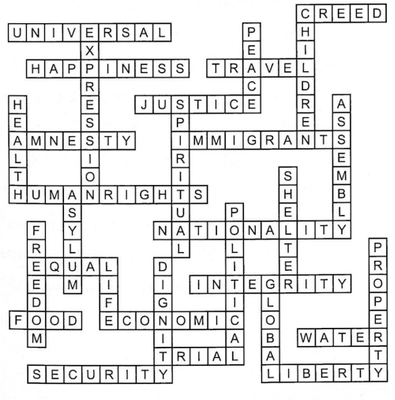
The Saint Louis University community mounted a huge response to support Haiti after the devastating earthquake this winter. The **SLU Task Force for Haiti** has been created to coordinate these efforts. It is a student-led, university wide relief effort What does the task force exist to do?

- Consult with and help support relief efforts on campus
- Contract events to support the relief work.
- Network SLU's efforts to support Haiti

Right: High school in Gressier, Haiti, located only a few miles of the epicenter. Photo by Lauren Hashiguchi. Top: The school after the earthquake. Photo by Dr. Amanda Lehman, whose parents runs a clinic that Randolph World Ministries supports.

Fundraising Goal:

$50,000 to go towards several different organizations. Contact the Task Force for Haiti at sluhaitirelief@gmail.com for information about involvement and ways the Task Force can assist your fundraising efforts. Together we can aid the international community in rebuilding Haiti!



KrissKross solution

CryptoQuip solution

The world is a dangerous place, not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it. ~Albert Einstein

Healing Injustice Through Advocacy

by Libby Fischer

Injustice takes many forms, and the inability to receive medical attention and treatment when sick is just one of them. Healthcare has been a polarizing issue in the United States since the Great Depression, when social security was signed into law. There is much debate to whether or not all people have the *right* to healthcare. Perhaps there will never be complete agreement on this issue, but in 1965, the United States government took a stand. By passing the Medicare and Medicaid Acts, it guaranteed that all elderly and all qualifying "poor" citizens of the United States would have access to healthcare regardless of how much they could pay for the care they received. When President Lyndon B. Johnson signed this bill into law, he did so in the wake of his "Great Society" program, which was intended to do two things: eradicate poverty and eliminate racial injustice. Nearly forty-five years later, as residents of mid-town St. Louis we have the unfortunate opportunity of seeing up close one of the starkest examples of how far short this program fell of its goals in both respects.

But the issue is not just limited to inner city St. Louis. The United States' broken healthcare system affects the nation has a whole, but its disproportionate socioeconomic impact on minorities and immigrants makes it an unjust system in and of itself. The increased economic burden on these groups not only compounds the daily struggles of lower-class minority families trying to feed and care for themselves, but also makes it more difficult for the individual members of these groups to move their families out of poverty because of regressive payment strategies for healthcare. In a society that

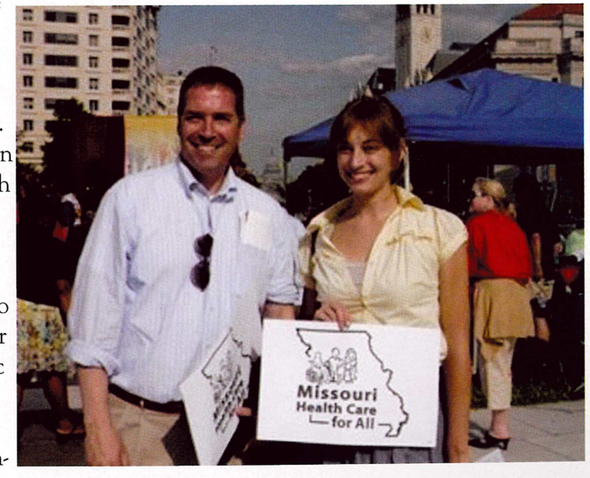
CIHJ Executive Director Kevin Minder answers questions on Capitol Hill during Washington's Health Policy Week this past June. Photo by Laura Weis.

prides itself on the possibility of upward mobility for all people, this hardly seems fair.

One organization in St. Louis is doing something about this injustice. Based just outside of the city limits in Olivette, the Center for Immigrant Healthcare Justice (CHIJ) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization working toward equitable and affordable access to quality healthcare for the U.S. immigrant population. Executive Director Kevin Minder formed the Center in 2005 after earning his Doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome. His studies focused on a five-year bar that prevents most lawfully residing immigrants in the U.S. from receiving federally funded public health coverage (Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)), should they fall into poverty. This means that legally permanent residents – those immigrants who "followed the rules" in coming to the United States, and who work and pay taxes in accordance with the responsibilities of citizenship– are ineligible to receive Medicaid during their first five years they live in the country. The five-year bar was instituted in 1996 welfare reform legislation, and since then millions of low-income immigrants – men, women, and children – have been denied access to public health coverage they would otherwise be eligible to receive.

The United States is the only industrialized country that does not recognize and secure a constitutional right to healthcare. CIHJ works in solidarity with immigrants, and invites citizens and immigrants to work together for systematic change and universal access to healthcare for all members of society. The Center seeks to build public consensus that healthcare is a public good to which every member of society should have access, in contrast to the current U.S. system, which treats healthcare as a commodity that is subject to the whims of the free market. The Center's work is grounded in the principle of solidarity: how a society treats the rights of all its members affects society as a whole. The Center believes a network of educated, engaged citizens and immigrants, working together to advocate for the right to healthcare for the most vulnerable members of our society, can help secure universal access to healthcare for all, and a healthier, happier American society.

If you would like to get involved with the Center for Immigrant Health care Justice, please contact Assistant Director Laura Weis at lweis@cihj.org. Check out the Center's web site at www.cihj.org.



CIHJ directors Kevin Minder and Laura Weis met with senators and health care policy advisers in Washington, D.C. this past June. Photo by Laura Weis.

ON HAITI

by Tim Toby

Haiti. You've heard a lot about the place lately. Just turn on CNN. Check your group invites on Facebook. A country that was once barely more than a blip on the average person's geographical radar is now a part of the everyday conversations of millions of people across the world. Haiti has suddenly become omnipresent in the dialogue of international politics. Rock concerts for its benefit are cropping up quicker than new Twitter accounts. The events of the last two weeks are inescapable—unless you're a hermit, a Luddite, or a Russian cosmonaut frozen in orbit, you know that something big went down in Haiti. Something terrible.

On January 12 at 4:53 pm, the USGS recorded a magnitude 7.0 earthquake striking just 15 miles west-south-west of one of the most populated cities in the Caribbean. In case you aren't a geologist, 7.0's are huge—these are the earthquakes that flatten entire cities. The ones that go down in history books. Two weeks ago, Port-au-Prince, Haiti crumbled to dust in the fingers of that great 7.0. In a matter of minutes,

Haitian girls prepare a meal outside of the rubble in Gressier. Photo by Tim Queen.

Haiti's capital was transformed from a sprawling, hillside metropolis into a de facto graveyard. Reports from the BBC that were posted just 24 hours after the earthquake recount the disturbing imagery of a historic disaster: streets littered with corpses and debris, a presidential palace reduced to rubble, the deafening cries of citizens entombed beneath the collapsed walls and ceilings of their residences.

The devastation is not limited to Port-au-Prince. ABC correspondent Lisa Millar writes of the pancaked town of Leogane at the earthquake's epicenter, where tens of thousands of Haitians have evacuated to sugarcane fields and mangrove swamps. As many as 30,000 people are reported to have died here in the earthquake's initial moments, crushed by falling concrete slabs before they were even aware of danger.

The statistics are horrific. As of January 24, the confirmed death toll from the earthquake and its subsequent aftershocks is 150,000 people, and Haiti's information minister claims that number could climb to as many as 300,000 dead. There are at least 1.5 million people left without a home, and perhaps as many as 3 million people affected by the earthquake. The UK's Telegraph reports that more than 11,000 US military personnel have arrived in Haiti to assist international relief efforts, which have also been boosted by 3,500 UN peace-keepers. Even with a steady stream of financial aid, food rations, and temporary housing flowing into the country, the situation remains dire in Haiti. For a country that was already in a lot of trouble even before the earthquake, it will be decades before Haiti can recover.

Before January 12, Haiti was arguably the worst lost cause in the developing world. The U.S. State Department describes Haiti as one of the least developed and least stable countries in the Western Hemisphere. Ever since its birth as an independent republic in 1804, Haiti has been a nation walking on the broken glass of political strife and civil unrest. Even with high hopes garnered by the election of President Rene Preval in 2006, the country has struggled to escape the problems of the past.

The Washington Post describes a country of 10 million people, with more than half living in destitution in ramshackle adobe structures teetering dangerously on hillsides. When the earthquake hit, the country was still trying to get back on its feet after a terrible hurricane season in 2008 and work out other social and political traumas that trace throughout the country's dark history of political upheaval. In short, Haiti has been upended at the worst possible moment.

In many ways, the aftermath of the first great disaster of the decade continues to reflect Haiti's fragility as a nation. Multiple news media sources in the country are revealing a society driven by escalating tensions and the absent presence of a domestic infrastructure capable of dealing with the disaster. Five days after the initial earthquake, reports from MSNBC.com shed light on rampant looting and crime within stricken areas, as well as violent cases of civil unrest, seemingly stemming from Haitian frustration at an invisible government. An imminent public health crisis is rapidly unfolding, as Haitians struggle to meet their basic needs—food, water, and housing are all scarce for people left homeless in and around Port-au-Prince. According to the Telegraph, medics in Haiti now cite public health as the country's most pressing issue. With thousands of people cramped in close-quarters, makeshift housing, and a lack of water and healthcare, there is a high risk of spreading infections like meningitis or measles.

Jeffrey Sachs, reporting for the Washington Post, describes today's Haiti as "a body without a head." Even in areas unaffected by the earthquake the normal operations of government have ceased, and any international peace-keeping presence has relocated to the capital to aid in relief efforts. There is speculation that Haiti will not be able to sustain itself without expansive, long-term aid from the international community. According to Sachs, much more than the restoration of basic needs in the country is required for reconstruction—Haitian currency must be backed up, salaries of public officials assured, food security must be provided, a construction industry must be revived and expanded, and private companies have to be contracted to set up operations. Political and medical issues, as well, are too out-of-control for the distraught Haitian government to deal with by itself.

Haiti, it seems, will be an international concern for many years in the future. At a time where the solutions to Haiti's problems seem foggier than the clouds of dirt and dust that obscure the images of the aftermath streaming out of Port-au-Prince, one thing is clear: we can thank the growing connectedness of our society for the emergence of a forgotten and lost nation in our consciences. Technology has improved connectivity among different nations of the world. There is only one world, and its troubles and triumphs are shared by all of us. Emma M. Burke, a survivor of the 7.4 magnitude earthquake that destroyed San Francisco in 1906, wrote: "Let me say that this stupendous disaster leads a thoughtful person to two conclusions: faith in humanity, and the progress of the human race. All artificial restraints of our civilization fell away with the earthquake's shocks, every man was his brother's keeper."

This recent event, while tragic and terrible, creates an opportunity to define this emerging decade as one of international brotherhood and cooperation, where even the smallest and poorest of nations can count on the rest of the world when tragedy strikes.

Pope Benedict

on the Need for a World Political Authority

by David C. Oughton, Ph.D.

Pope Benedict speaks at a UN Conference. UN Photo by Paulo Filgueiras.

In his third and most recent encyclical "Charity in Truth," Pope Benedict XVI applies the ethical and spiritual principles of Catholic social teaching, such as charity, the human family, the common good, the defense of life from conception to natural death, and the dignity of every human, two the world-wide economic crisis, globalization, workers' rights, labor unions, social justice, poverty and hunger, international aid, the environment, human development, and world peace.

In Chapter 5 of this encyclical, Pope Benedict also explains another principle of modern Catholic social teaching—the need for an effective and moral world political authority. This principle was first developed in Pope John XXIII's 1963 encyclical "Peace on Earth." Pope John realized that global problems cannot be adequately solved without "public authority which is in a position to operate in an effective manner on a worldwide basis," as stated in paragraph 137. Pope Paul VI and the bishops at the Second Vatican Council emphasized everyone's duty "to strain every muscle as we work for the time when all war can be completely outlawed by international consent. This goal undoubtedly requires the establishment of some universal public authority acknowledged as such by all, and endowed with effective power to safeguard, on the behalf of all, security, regard for justice, and respect for rights" (as found in The Church Today, #82).

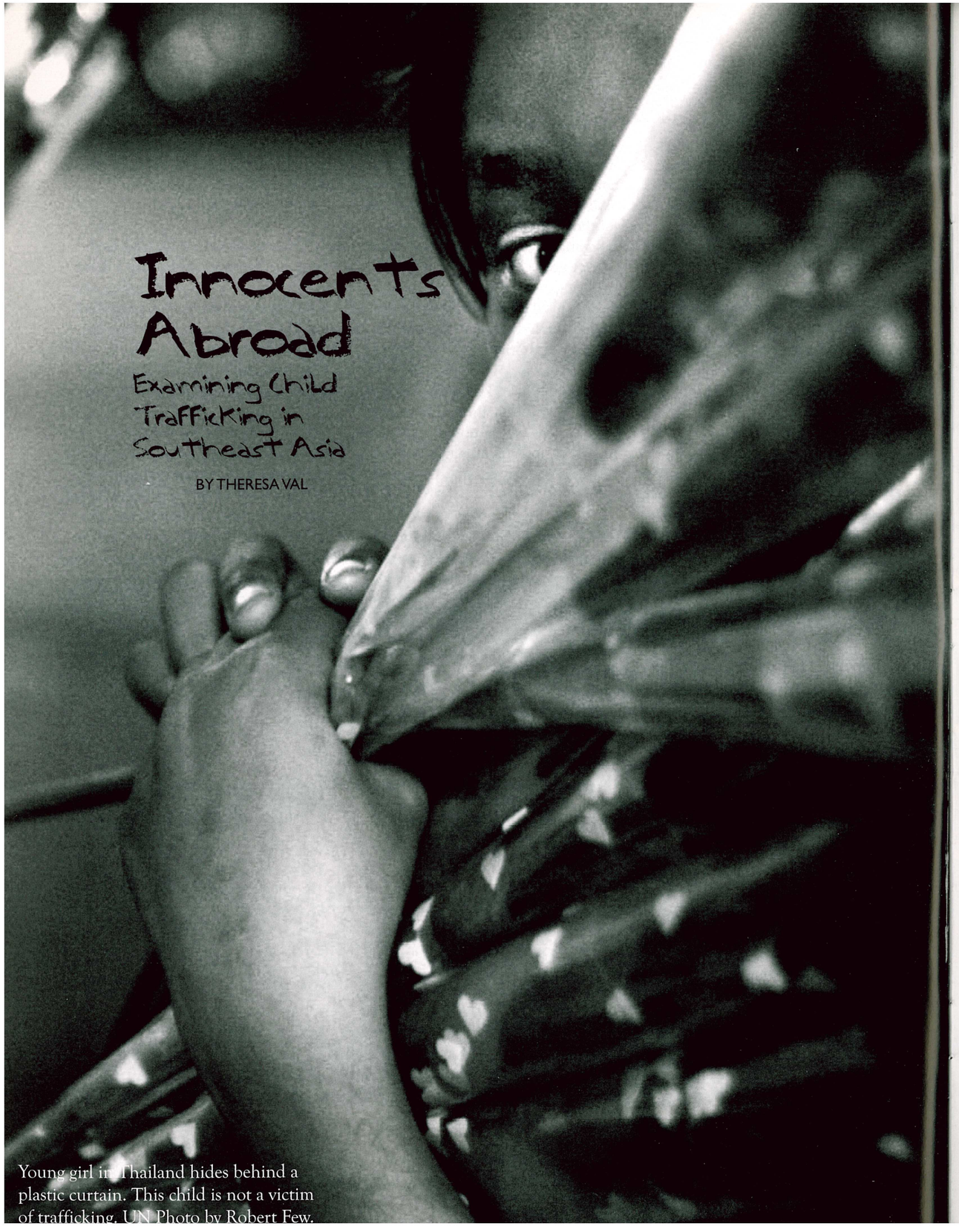
Besides outlawing war and maintaining a peaceful world order, Pope Benedict adds these reasons why "a true world political authority" is urgently needed: "to manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration." Pope Benedict and other recent popes have realized that wars and genocides continue and so many other global problems are not being adequately solved because the world lacks a public authority that is "regulated by law," that is based on "the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity," that seeks "to establish the common good," and makes a commitment "to securing authentic integral human development inspired by the values of charity in truth."

Because of the "unrelenting growth of global interdependence," Pope Benedict states that there is a need for a "reform of the United Nations Organization, and likewise of economic institutions and international finance, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth." Even though the U.N. has accomplished so much since its creation after the Second World War, it has often been weak and ineffective in solving global problems and preventing wars for these reasons: (1) it is confederation of sovereign national governments that is based on international law, a system of customs and treaties; (2) the U.N. General Assembly can pass only nonbinding resolutions, and its system of "one nation-one vote" is not democratic because of differences in national populations; (3) the U.N. Security Council has often been impotent in preventing or ending wars because of the veto power of any one of the five permanent members, used for themselves or their allies; (4) the rulings of the U.N. International Court of Justice on treaty violations have often been ignored by national governments; and (5) the United Nations system must rely on dues from national governments, which are not always paid.

In order to give the U.N. "real teeth," it should be transformed into a democratic world federation of nations that would create, enforce, and adjudicate world laws and be able to prosecute individuals who violate them. In order to prevent genocides and other violations of human rights, Pope Benedict believes that there is an urgent need to implement the "Responsibility to Protect" principle: national governments agree to protect people within their borders, not just their own citizens, and the international community is committed to humanitarian intervention.

The kind of world political authority which Pope Benedict supports would not be the only government in the world. He states that it should be based on the principle of "subsidiarity, for the management of globalization." The national, state, and local governments would continue to solve problems as well as make and enforce laws for people within their own borders. According to Pope Benedict, a democratic global authority would need to be "universally recognized" and be vested with "effective power." It would therefore require a world constitution which would make explicit the powers and limitations of the organs of the world federation of nations; the checks and balances between those organs; the rights, powers, and limitations of national governments; and the rights and responsibilities of all citizens of the world. Such a reform of the United Nations, according to Pope Benedict, would help build "a social order that at last conforms to the moral order."

All quotes, unless otherwise noted, are located in paragraph 67 of the document.



Innocents Abroad

Examining Child Trafficking in Southeast Asia

BY THERESA VAL

Young girl in Thailand hides behind a plastic curtain. This child is not a victim of trafficking. UN Photo by Robert Few.

More than 20 years after the implementation of The Convention on the Rights of the Child, sex trafficking remains a thriving trade in South Asia. It represents the grimmer, more deplorable aspect of supply and demand, and although the thought of children bought and sold as commodities seems inhuman to most, it remains the harsh reality for many innocents abroad.

Although difficult to pinpoint an exact figure, the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre reports that about 1.2 million children are trafficked globally for the worst kinds of child labor—that is, work that poses the greatest dangers to their health, safety, and morals. Childhood generates darker memories for these individuals. Under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, all persons under 18 years of age are entitled to be protected from exploitation, to remain with their families, to go to school, to be protected from sexual violence, and to have time to play; however, throughout the world, children are continually exploited for domestic servitude, begging, criminal activities, armed conflict, forced marriage, debt release, settlement of disputes, and quite often, prostitution.

"In South Asia alone, between 5,000 to 7,000 girls per year become victims to the trafficking trade."

Essentially, trafficking of human beings is comprised of two primary components: movement—whether it be recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt—and intention of exploitation, as defined under Article 3(a) of the Palermo Protocol of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, particularly Women and Children. In an increasingly interconnected world, child trafficking has benefited labor markets in facilitating the provision of cheap labor (the "supply") to ensure the demands of those who profit.

Even if a child has reached the legal minimum working age, trafficking exposes the individual to unacceptable labor standards. As UNICEF reports, regardless of being within a country or across a border, movement places children in a particularly vulnerable situation. For one, they are separated from families and communities who serve as their primary sources of safety and support. They are isolated and subject to manipulation. If in an unfamiliar country (where perhaps they do not speak the language), they have no means or knowledge of how to escape. These children are entirely at the mercy of their employers, and the slightest infraction could result in sexual aggression, starvation, beatings, or loss of what little liberties remain.

Child trafficking for sex exploitation raises further concerns. Unable to exercise control over their lives and bodies, child prostitutes suffer the physical consequences of repeated sexual aggression; consequently, sexual violence has emerged as a leading factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS in young female populations.

Comprising nearly a quarter of trafficking cases worldwide, as stated by UNICEF, child trafficking has emerged as a pressing issue in the majority of South and Southeast Asian countries. Bangladeshi and Pakistani boys are often targets for camel jockeying in the United Arab Emirates. Girls as young as 13 years from Southeastern Asia can be trafficked as mail-order brides. UNICEF reports that, in the South Asia area alone, between 5,000 to 7,000 girls per year become victims to the trafficking trade and in the Mekong sub-region of Southeast Asia, about 35% of all "sex workers" are between 12 and 17 years. These areas face the struggle of dismantling an exploitative trade that has become culturally accepted.

How are children subjected to the trafficking trade? Although often a risk factor, poverty is not the stand-alone explanation. Indeed, there is a changing variety of circumstances that trigger these situations. For example, familial disruptions (namely, death of a parent) can leave children without economic means and more likely to enter child labor. Institutional-level factors influence a child's vulnerability as well. In countries, lack of access to education or ethnic discrimination magnifies a child's disadvantages; lack of a birth registration system makes the task of tracking a child's welfare near impossible. Domestic violence, both physical and sexual, renders children prey to trafficking, as they have been betrayed by a crucial safety and support system.

"Sexual violence has emerged as a leading factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS in young female populations."

Recruitment in trafficking is just as varied, as seen in UNICEF studies. In some situations, a relationship of trust facilitates the exploitation: a community member or someone of similar ethnicity might coerce the child into entering work. Sometimes recruiters share a similar profile with future victims; here, older trafficking victims—knowing that much profit can be made—will

The daughter of a sex worker in India expresses her sadness for mother's suffering . UN Photo by Achinto.

partake in the very cycle that exploited them. In other circumstances, male-based networks will perpetuate stigmatization to entrap victims, as indicated in a study by the International Organization for Migration. The use of rape can be a coercive tool, as it ultimately destroys an individual's virginal status and distances him or her from traditional communities.

While to many these children are obviously victims, law enforcement in South and Southeast Asia may not necessarily hold the same view. Trafficked children might be too intimidated of too affected emotionally and psychologically to testify. Consequently, they might be held accountable for the crimes forced upon them; in the end, they are deemed as culpable as the real perpetrators.

Attempts at preventing child trafficking have been implemented worldwide, most notably with proposals to supplement and strengthen the 2000 Palermo Protocol. Provisions under this legal instrument would discourage the demand of trafficked children, safely return victims to their homes, and address underlying risk factors; however, it should be noted that none of the countries in South or Southeast Asia have ratified this protocol, with the exceptions of India, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and the Philippines, according to the UNICEF Innocenti Centre. The technicalities of terminology have raised disputes. In some countries, the age of adulthood is much younger than 18 years. To further complicate the matter, certain countries carry different age standards based on gender or certain actions.

The lack of reliable data on child trafficking has also stunted more synergized efforts. Without a true sense of the phenomenon's scope, many countries are reluctant to allocate funds and manpower. Important to note, as well, is the multi-faceted nature of child trafficking. It is not exclusively a human rights issue. Rather, it encompasses several frameworks, requiring one to consider the moral, organized crime, migration, labor, poverty and development, gender, and public health implications of the issue. More coordination is needed between international, regional, and non-governmental sectors to make counter-trafficking initiatives effective. Additionally, much effort should go towards addressing the socio-cultural and socio-economic roots of this phenomenon.

Law enforcement measures tend to focus on the process of trafficking, offering short-term protective remedies; however, child trafficking is a multi-faceted problem with long-term effects. What happens to children once they have left the trafficking trade? Too often, the cycle sweeps them up again. Stigmatized, without support services and without education or skills, they find it difficult to reenter their societies and find gainful employment.

As vulnerable and neglected as before, this supply of innocents becomes prey to the demands of a globalized world.

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Paving the way to Success

by Laura Casey

While there have been many proposed solutions to managing or ending the war in Afghanistan, one that General David Patraeus, head of the United States Central Command, noted in the Afghanistan edition of the *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (CFM) is the creation of roads. Foreign Policy Magazine emphasizes that "roads are the single most important path to success in Afghanistan."

It may seem insignificant, but building roads could accomplish four vital things for Afghanistan. It could create jobs for a largely unemployed and impoverished Afghan people, it could make it easier for coalition troops to access the rugged bases of both Al Qaeda and the Taliban, it could restore Afghan confidence in the West, and give the Afghan central government more power.

The Central Intelligence Agency states that, in Afghanistan, 53% of the people live below the poverty line and 40% are unemployed (CIA). The Taliban are well aware of this and use it to their advantage. They offer poor men a wage if they join their insurgency. This means that many of the Taliban fighters aren't motivated by the Taliban goals and ideals (not committed terrorists), they just need a way to provide for their family. "They're offering youth money, and if you're in a village and you have no money at all and you're offered a salary, you might join. They're survivors," said Canadian Defense Minister Gordon O'Connor.

In addition, the Taliban is also willing to protect these Afghans' opium crops. According to the United Nations, Afghanistan is responsible for over 93% of the world's opium supply and is a main source of income for many farmers. The Afghan government and many Western nations have been trying to destroy the crop to help stop the drug's use. Unfortunately, this means all the more people out of a job.

The Taliban also has the advantage of access to many of the poor and rural parts of the country because of its many outposts. Here, they can remain in contact with and influence tribes. In addition, the Taliban and Al Qaeda maintain their international headquarters in the rugged Pashtun Border region where Afghanistan and Pakistan join. This is an important, strategic location where Western nations have very little access or influence.

While their permanent presence is down from the 90% we saw before they fell in 2001, as of 2007, their presence was at 54%, as was reported by the British newspaper, *The Guardian*. The U.S. and its allies are currently dedicating financial and human resources to reduce this negative presence, but it is difficult to accomplish with limited access and knowledge of the whereabouts of the Taliban.

Another significant problem with U.S. presence in Afghanistan is a lack of credibility with the Afghan people. Large portions of the funds given to the Afghan people are siphoned away by an illegitimate and corrupt government. The Afghan people suffer the effects of this and see Western powers condoning the government's corrupt use of funding.

According to an article in the New York Times, "...few issues more stoke the resentment of ordinary Afghans than the tens of billions of dollars of foreign aid from which they have seen little or no benefit." They see our presence in the rubble and body counts and wonder what exactly we have done to improve their lives.

Roads, among other forms of infrastructure, would be a physical representation of how the U.S. presence is helping them. They need tangible evidence and examples to make our presence legitimate in their eyes.

In addition, it would give troops

Afghan men shovel stone as they work on a road construction project under the World Food Programme. UN photo.

the access needed to enter and interact with the villagers. This could enhance diplomacy and international relationships and also help distinguish the enemy from the innocent, which has been a problem because the Taliban and Al Qaeda easily blend in with civilians. The CFM states that "soldiers in Afghanistan must get out among the people...that is the only way to disconnect the enemy from the civilians. Persistent presence—living among the population in small groups, staying in villages overnight for months at a time—is dangerous, and it will mean more casualties, but it's the only way to protect the population effectively. And it will make U.S. troops more secure in the long run."

Because Afghanistan has so many natural land barriers making it difficult to travel, ethnic regions remain semi-autonomous. Tribes have developed their own social and governmental structures that make the need for a central government virtually unnecessary. Because of this (and the isolation from the local government), many people have a closer allegiance to their tribal elders than they do with the government.

Fostering relationships with the tribes would help the U.S. to communicate with them. They listen to their tribal elders. General Patraeus observed that the majority of those living in tribes cannot read, do not have access to sources of news; thus, most of their information comes from the elders. If the elders gain more trust in Western powers, then through them, the U.S. could gain the approval from the people.

What roads would do (to some degree) is help the government build stronger relationships with the many tribes. They could be able to create a network that would connect the people to the government and to basic services like health clinics, markets, and schools. It could stimulate flow of funds through the local economy by allowing people to travel, enhancing communication networks, and creating new markets, which might become government regulated. These changes could potentially lead to progress.

The government could create confidence by not only building and maintaining the roads, but by protecting them. Patrols would be able to secure the roads and allow access to the villages to secure them from the Taliban. Without roads to create these networks, the tribes would most likely continue to live as they have and the Taliban will continue to use this to their advantage.

The U.S. needs to give the Afghan people a reason not to turn back to the Taliban for support. U.S. work in Afghanistan needs to provide tangible evidence for the people to gain their confidence and show them that the U.S. is not occupying their land just for the sake of exercising our power. Building roads to services, diplomacy, security and jobs just might help to resolve the war.

My Story, Many Stories

by Ben Stephan

One woman's struggle with addiction, homelessness, and rehabilitation

St. Louis is the home to more than the Arch, the Cardinals, Forest Park, or the Busch Stadium. Seldom considered are the ignored and downtrodden homeless of St. Louis. We rarely consider their struggles or listen to them, yet they are there in plain sight. We drive past them as they occupy a small patch of sidewalk or sit on a park bench. We seem them, but we hardly ever recognize them. An even more unrecognized issue among these people it is the hidden world of drug and alcohol addiction among women in St. Louis. I am going to tell the eye-opening story of a woman who is a walking survivor of it. I want to take you on her journey through hell and back through her long struggle with addiction and her uphill battle of rehabilitation.

I first met Jackie at the St. Philippine Home, a transition home located between University City and Central West End. At first glance, Jackie looks like any other 46-year-old woman, carrying herself with great posture. Her short frame is complimented by her big personality. "June 20, 2009," she tells me with pride. That is the date she decided to go clean. She has been clean ever since.

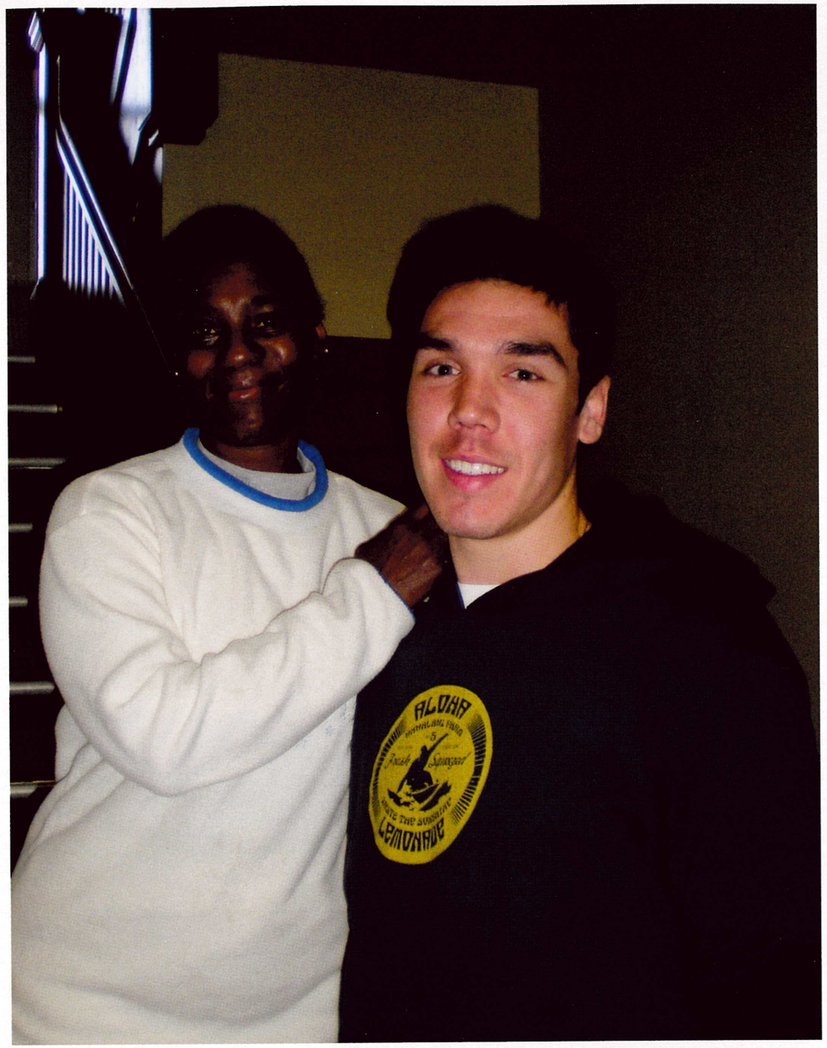
Jackie grew up all over St. Louis, but it was South City that became her stomping ground. She was second youngest of ten. She never knew her father; he died when she was too young to remember. Her mother was an alcoholic and abusive to all of the children. She died when Jackie was only 10. Her sister raised her from then on until she became pregnant at age nineteen. By this time, Jackie had dropped out of high school after completing the 11th grade.

She has never owned a permanent residence. Instead she lived for two to three weeks at a time with friends or acquaintances until they told her she had to leave. She had two serious relationships and had six children, four by one father, two by the other. She lost custody of her first four children, who she remains in contact with, because of her drug and alcohol record. Disappointingly, her abusive, dangerous ex-boyfriend got custody over her children. She was forced to give up custody of her other two children only five days after she gave birth to them. She has not seen them since. Jackie has never been married, nor does she believe in marriage, no doubt a result of her terrible experiences with her past relationships.

Jackie's alcohol addiction began when she was 21. She drank beer first and then became addicted to liquor. During this time, she experienced frequent blackouts. Four years later, Jackie's older brother introduced her to crack cocaine, and her life took an even greater turn for the worse. For the next twenty years, Jackie was a crack addict. She continued to work, but all of her income was spent on the drug. Her health and ambition decreased as her debt and dependence increased. Prior to her crack addiction, she was addicted to marijuana and primos, a less potent form of crack cocaine that is wrapped in cigarette papers.

The saying goes, "Once a recovering addict, always a recovering addict." Jackie, much to her credit, is now a recovering addict. She is a client of the Queen of Peace Center, a women's shelter located on North Newstead by the Central West End, whose mission is to provide improve the health and coping skills of addicted women and their children. This is not her first time through rehabilitation, though. This is the seventh time Jackie has entered rehabilitation. This time, she swears to herself, is her final time. But how can she say this with such certainty? What makes this time any different than the previous six?

"Because I saw Death," Jackie replies. "I was hit in the head with a pistol. I was raped, beaten, and choked. I had to jump out of a two-story window to escape. That is when I decided I didn't a part of it any more. I wasn't ready before. I wasn't doing it for me. Now, I'm ready. I'm doing it for me."



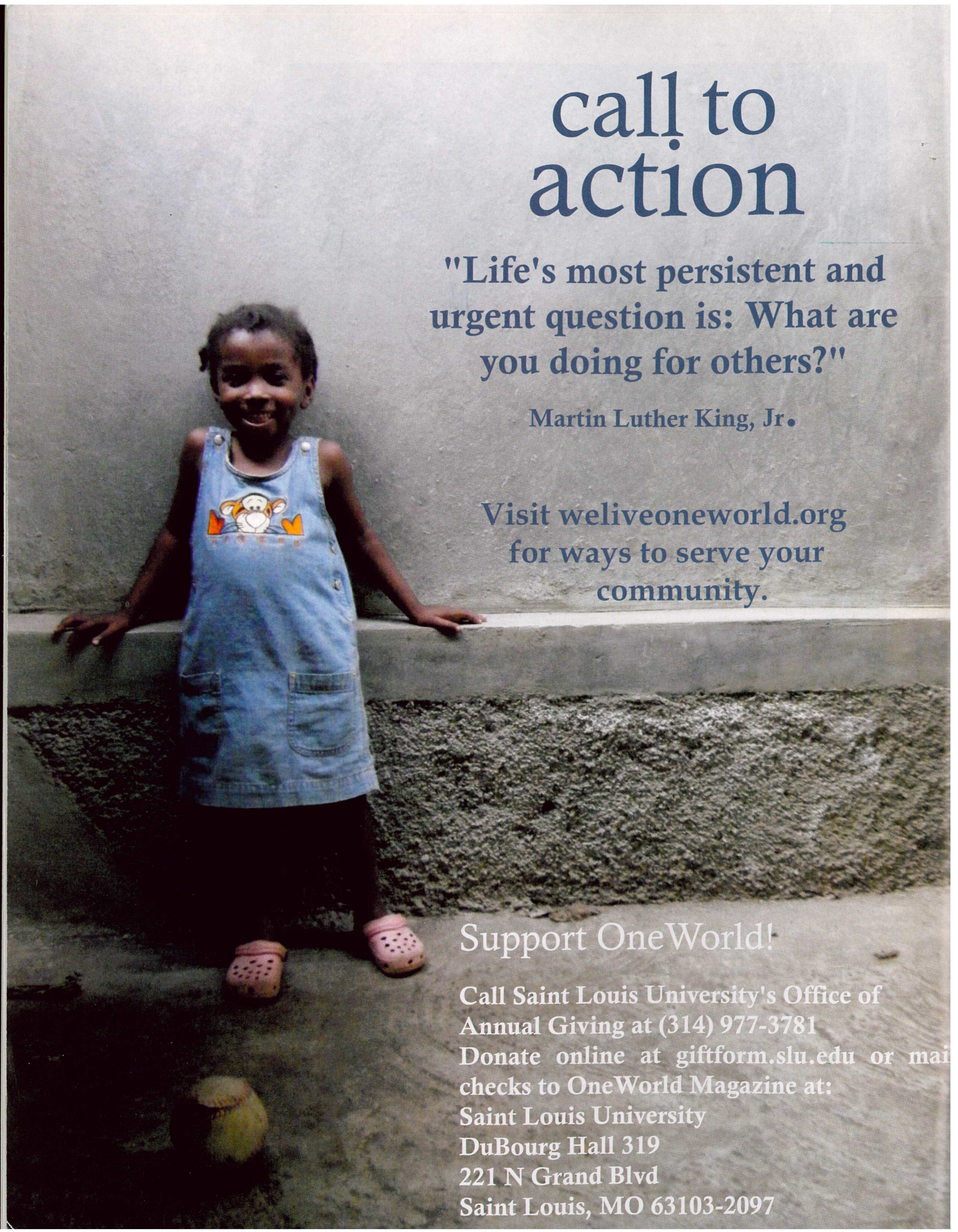
Jackie and Stephan stand together in the St. Philippine Home for transitional homeless women. Photo by Libby Fischer.

Rehabilitation is a long and strenuous process. Without support, almost always one will succumb to the pressures of addiction. Along with Queen of Peace and St. Philippine Home, Jackie's children give her strength. She has a grandson now who is her pride and joy. Although she is still dependent on support from the transition home, she has a job working part-time as a janitor through the Basic Educational Skills Training program at the St. Patrick Center. In fact, she recently was promoted to supervisor. Jackie does not know how to drive a car or ride a bike, so she walks every day to work and to anywhere else she needs to go.

Though many people have given up on Jackie in her life, she has not given up on herself. After her eight-week part-time job ends, she wants to work full-time. She considers her specialty cleaning, and one day she would like to do private duty, taking care of the elderly. She also aspires to get her GED and take some computer classes during her spare time. Eventually, she wants to own her own house, and she has already started saving some of her income. Most of all, though, Jackie wants to be back with her children. "I want to be a family again," she says. "I want to be ready for that day my two kids come find me. I want to be able to sit down and tell them my story. I want them to know that their momma is a better person."

Jackie's story is her own story, but it is also the story of countless other women in St. Louis and around the country. Her story is one of neglected women who are so accustomed to pain that they become numb to it. It is a story that sometimes cannot be told, but rather seen in the eyes of women like Jackie while they tell it. I asked Jackie if there were other stories like hers. She bluntly replied "I can guarantee you there is at least one woman out there with my exact same story, and yes, my story is representative of a large group of women out there."

For more information on the Queen of Peace Center, please visit www.qopcstl.org or call 314-531-0511



call to action

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Martin Luther King, Jr.

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